



Ministry of Reconciliation Practitioners' Key Principles

Leslie A.B. Frye, Ministry of Reconciliation director

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(See below for references)



- 1. In a climate of polarization: Harmonize.**
 - a. Honor the dignity of all, including self.
 - b. "Imagine that it is possible to hold multiple realities and world views simultaneously as parts of a greater whole without losing one's identity and viewpoint and without needing to impose or force one's view on the other. Pursue complexity as a friend rather than an enemy." (Lederach, 62)
 - c. "Talk and negotiate with everyone. We do not have enemies." (Association of Peasant Workers of Carare (ATCC), as quoted in Lederach, 15).
 - d. "[We] will not exchange or tolerate scandalous, malicious, or inaccurate information concerning others." (2008 Church of the Brethren "Ethics in Ministerial Relations" Paper, p. 1212)

- 2. In a climate of fear: Courage to risk hope.** (Lederach, 163-69)
 - a. Risk stepping beyond violence.
 - b. Risk moments when you cannot predict or control the outcome.
 - c. Risk having faith.

- 3. In a climate of perfectionism and arrogance: Grace, humility, and perseverance.**
 - a. Recognize and engage the inevitability of power and power imbalance.
 - i. "While empowerment of the powerless is a premier value in our system, [reconcilers] should not lend their skills to empowering groups who do not hold the values of empowerment, freedom, and justice for all peoples, regardless of race, sex, religion, or national origin. In fact, an intervenor should place a high value on working against such groups. Thus the value positions and ethical criteria outlined herein do not call for intervention activities that will further empower racists, sexists, fascists, militarists, or religious bigots, for to do so would be to contribute to violation of the very premise of human fulfillment from which these principles flow." (Laue and Cormick, 222)
 - b. Recognize and engage the impossibility of neutrality.
 - i. Reconciliation is about relationship (Matthew 5:23-24). Because there is no "impartial and neutral" party in relationship, navigating conflict requires wise discernment around how to engage, when to step back and when to ask for help. Jesus is reconciliation personified and yet he was anything but impartial or neutral!

The ministry of reconciliation Paul describes in 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 is not a community mediation center, but a beloved community comprised of sisters and brothers who come with all their prickly and beautiful diversity as well as an unwavering faith that - by God's grace - what binds them as ambassadors for Christ is stronger than what divides them (Ephesians 2:15-17).

- ii. "Since neutrality or claims to neutrality on the part of an intervenor in a community dispute almost always work to the advantage of the party in power, the intervenor should not claim to be (or worse, actually feel) neutral. Such a stance is evidence of the intervenor's failure to make conscious, explicit, and (where possible) public decisions." (Laue and Cormick, 221)
- c. Despite the best training and most noble intentions, we are all fallible. So we learn from our mistakes; discern when to forgive and when to forbear; and extend grace to ourselves and others. Then we try again.
- d. Reconciliation is a creative act, requiring the discipline of constantly learning and improving technique while also being open to the new and unimaginable. (Lederach, ix)
- e. Reconciliation is relentlessly exhausting and joy-full, requiring periods of rest and renewal and celebration and play.

MoR's Key Principles are derived from countless influences, chief among them include:

- Donna Hicks, *Dignity: Its Essential Role in Resolving Conflict* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press) 2011.
- James Laue and Gerald Cormick, "The Ethics of Intervention in Community Disputes," Chapter 10 in *The Ethics of Social Intervention*, edited by Gordon Bermant, Herbert C. Kelman, and Donald P. Warwick (Washington, DC: Halsted Press) 1978, pp. 205-232.
- John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press) 2004.
- Bernard S. Mayer, *Beyond Neutrality: Confronting the Crisis in Conflict Resolution* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass) 2004.
- Thomas Porter, *The Spirit and Art of Conflict Transformation: Creating a Culture of JustPeace* (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books) 2010.

**These principles are not cast in stone! What needs to be added? Clarified? Omitted? How would you articulate principles for the Ministry of Reconciliation? Contact MoR@OnEarthPeace.org with your ideas.*